

# The Nation and The Athenæum

## CHRISTMAS BOOK SUPPLEMENT

### SOME AUTUMN NOVELS.

By J. D. BERESFORD.

QUITE early this autumn, while some of the best fruit of the publishing season was still unmarketed, the London booksellers were beginning to suffer from the fret that comes to a man when he has to choose between rejecting the perfectly good wares of respected publishers and being hopelessly, dangerously overstocked. A rumour of it reached me hundreds of miles away from the centre of disturbance, as it had been the ominous, sudden swell in a tranquil sea, the last dying urgency of some distant unknown storm. And when I came to sample the better, and presumably more saleable, stock of the season, I turned to it with the detached air of one who seeks the solution of a problem.

I began with three novels that fell into a category by reason of a likeness of background: the somewhat familiar setting of the London that struggles within sight of the poverty line. Mr. Bennett, who deserves first place—apart from his reputation—for the perfect sureness of his handling, has taken us to Clerkenwell in "Riceyman Steps," just off the King's Cross Road, and has given depth to his background by his feeling for its history. He does not permit us to forget that this smoke-begrimed, barren timber of modern Clerkenwell was once a living tree. And his story—the last few years in the lives of Earlfoward, the miser bookseller, and his newly married wife, with, for contrast, the patient simplicity of the young charwoman Elsie and her half-demented, war-shocked lover—may be read as the last outstanding writing on the vast palimpsest with its million of now undecipherable inscriptions of London's history. There is the story, drawn for you with the clean, certain draughtsmanship of the master-craftsman. Regard it without too close a scrutiny and you will not notice that he has chosen to set it out, not on a clean sheet, but on a material that gives depth to the whole composition. I found in "Riceyman Steps" a sensibility I had a little missed in "Mr. Prohack" and "The Roll-Call."

We move north and east, not too far, when we enter the scene of Frank Swinnerton's "Young Felix," round about the borders of Kentish Town up to the village of Highgate. But, in this case, our hero has no roots in the past as had the middle-aged Earlfoward. Peckham and Dulwich, for example, would have done as well for the rearing of Felix Hunter and his immigrant family. We are concerned here exclusively with the living. And the first thing to say about them is that they live. Coming so freshly from Arnold Bennett, I was too tempted, at first, to criticize; to consider the too great profusion of incident in Felix's early life and the consequent compression towards the end—and more particularly inasmuch as Mr. Swinnerton frequently reminds one of the model he has studied. But, taken alone, this portrayal of the young Felix—his struggle with life's first immediacies, his sufferings when the family fell temporarily below the poverty line, his adolescence and first unfortunate marriage—is certainly one of Swinnerton's best achievements, fresh, vigorous, full of humour, and always living. I put it second only to his little *tour-de-force* "Nocturne."

Another flit north and east, up there to where Clapton was once a village and the Lea puts a sudden edge on "Under-London" (the title Mr. Stephen Graham has chosen for his novel), and we come to a realization of another phase in that proliferating organism. We are not here aware of London's history, but we are very much aware—it is the true theme of the book—of this spreading fungus of bricks and mortar. All "Under-London" is buried beneath it, and away beyond the Lea another vast patch grows and spreads, clinging to the railways for its main support. Mr. Graham—I say it in no carping spirit—is not primarily a novelist.

The story of the boyhood of Freddy Masters is an essay in the compilation of intensive detail rather than a piece of construction. It is all true, every word of it. Freddy and his school-friends are real boys, and they belong truly to their class and period. Their speech is as near "reporting" as the realist can go. But the book, as a whole, is a study rather than a composition. It is a book to read if you wish to know the kind of life lived in a north-eastern suburb thirty years ago. And it has the virtue of being readable and amusing throughout. And so we come to the end of London's influence on the autumn season.

Rose Macaulay's "Told by an Idiot" has nothing to do with London, although the principal characters chanced to live in it. The background is not a place, but a way of thinking, and it is this that provides the thesis which, stated without trimmings or half-shades, is that "we are to-day what yesterday we were, to-morrow we shall not be less," or more, or in any way different. Personally, I disagree with violence from this conclusion, but I have no space to argue. What I have to do is rather to advise the harassed bookseller to give the book place in the shop-window. "Told by an Idiot" is witty, and brilliantly clever in its faint satirization of our fathers, ourselves, and our children. And without the least ostentation Miss Macaulay has brought a real scholarship to her presentation of life, letters, and politics in the course of the past half-century. This is a book to buy and presently to refer to; but do not, I implore you, be inveigled by Miss Macaulay's art into accepting her thesis.

We are still in London as a mere place in which a great number of people continue, somehow, to live, when we come to a consideration of Aldous Huxley's "Antic Hay." And I must begin by saying that I would miss it out if I could, for I feel flatly incompetent to express an opinion on it. It offended me. The salacious intrigues of Theodore Gumbrell, Coleman, and Mercaptan filled me with impatience. Furthermore, I was altogether painfully aware of Mr. Huxley's immense cleverness. Indeed, I felt that, at times, he made a pageant of it; while at other times—as in the inset play at the night-club—I felt that all his cleverness had been concentrated on the designing of the costumes and that the pageant was, in truth, only wax-works. Mr. Huxley knows so many things that we—I speak for the average man—do not know; and his "Antic Hay" is unquestionably a book for the few—though it may sell on the reputation of certain passages. But I feel that he knows more about "things" than about men—or women.

We are free of smoke and the narrow life when we take up Sheila Kaye-Smith's "The End of the House of Alard." She has taken a large canvas and covered it with a history of the last few years of a Sussex county family, deep-rooted still, but failing in sap, dying off at the close with the tragic suddenness due to a change of condition. It is a great theme, and Miss Kaye-Smith has handled it very ably. She has been driven—by the exigencies of confining herself within the comparatively brief "post-war" period—to put the axe to the solid old trunk somewhat prematurely. She has missed, in consequence, a little of the fine inevitability of her earlier novel "Tamarisk Town." But this last book of hers is definitely an achievement, wonderfully well realized in all its detail and equally well portrayed; and with, moreover, that particularly professional touch about its management and arrangement which puts her—and her alone among the authors here treated—into the same class of practised craftsmanship as Arnold Bennett.

Before I come to my peroration in the examination of my last book, I must pause a moment for a reference to Maurice Baring's "A Triangle." It is a slight little piece, and yet within that compass the same story is told three separate times—an interesting essay, in some ways, but I found the three recounts too much alike.

D. H. Lawrence's "Kangaroo" stands quite apart from any of these seven other novels. We may say, and quite truly, that it is hurriedly written, that it is not a story,

that there is no attempt at construction in it, that except for "Kangaroo" himself—drawn with a violence and accuracy that remind one of the old Will Dyson cartoons—the characters are of no great importance. But, having said that, we have to acknowledge without any qualification whatever that this is the work of genius, thing separate in kind. What matters supremely to Lawrence is the search for reality among the souls of people—and of things. He may turn aside for half-a-dozen pages to describe—as no other living writer could—the colour, appearance, and life of South-East Australia; but even then it is some essence that he is searching for, and not to portray the effects of a three-dimensional world. And in "Kangaroo" he has, more frankly than in his other novels, resorted to autobiography. It is not only that he has incidentally told a long, true story of his experiences in Cornwall in the course of the war; but, also, that the central character is just himself, the lonely, passionate, eager Lawrence, desperately searching for the soul of humanity, in Australia: ". . . he had nothing to do with much that is in the world of man. When he was truly himself he had a quiet stillness in his soul, an inward trust. Faith undefined and indefinable. Then he was at peace with himself. Not content, but peace like a river, something flowing and full." Other writers may relate their stories to the deep historical past. Lawrence relates his to eternity.

And closing on that note of "peace like a river," I am able to forget, once more, the troubles of the London book-seller.

#### JOHN GALSWORTHY.

**The Manaton Edition of the Works of John Galsworthy in 21 Volumes.** Vols. I., II., and III., *The Forsyte Saga*; Vol. IV., *Villa Rubein*, and Other Stories. (Heinemann. 25 guineas the set of 21 volumes.)

It had better be confessed. This row of volumes in half-vellum, austere and fair, strongly resembling at a little distance a correct preservation of a classic, slightly surprised the reviewer when he saw on the back of one that it was the "Forsyte Saga." A collected edition of John Galsworthy! And the "Manaton," of course.

Why had he not expected it? Why was it not taken as the natural and perfect fruition of literary virtue in its proper season? As well ask why our younger critics, who have had to take over Hardy with Shakespeare, and who prove but little restive—so slightly reluctant that only a jealous observer would notice the pause—when accepting Conrad also as one about whom their opinions are not sought, appear not to have heard of John Galsworthy. They never mention him. They discuss freely other writers whose names have only just come and are at present unknown beyond the choice corners where the gossip of the publishers is exchanged. Everybody hopes, of course, that those so recent mauves and maroons are not such touchy blooms as they look, but that they will develop, in our searching British climate, sound woody stocks. We hope so, yet at the same time think it is fair to note how much more frequently we hear of them, as signs and wonders, than we do of an author whose growth is so well rooted that here is a collected edition of his works in white and gold.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that those who praise with such words as brilliant, clever, ingenious, and so on, should be doubtful about a description for the "Forsyte Saga." It would be foreign to them. It is certainly neither clever nor brilliant. Sagas never are. But the very fact that the book is called a saga may prove irritating to those who are ready to be suitably solemn before a literary reputation obtained in a way which puzzles them, a reputation which they have preferred to ignore rather than to challenge. But there, anyhow, the reputation is. We are dimly aware that America long ago regarded John Galsworthy as they do Thackeray and the Tower: a feature of the enduring British prospect. But not all of us know that the author of the "Man of Property," where English is read on the Continent of Europe, is regarded as a kind of symbol of the English—or, rather, of all that we should like to think we are, all that is fine and unassailable in our tradition. Now we read this "Manaton" edition we even feel that European students render us an embarrassing tribute when they take John Gals-

worthy as expressing veraciously that essentially British character and culture which deserved to survive for so long the battle and the breeze. The tribute is embarrassing because we know what the Continent cannot know—that Mr. Galsworthy's Country House, though not one of the stately homes of England, has been, since Tudor times, of far more importance than any of the stately homes; yet, nevertheless, that it was not all England, though strangers would never guess that; for behind that fair front, hidden and almost noiseless, another England lived and moved. Our governing class lived in that Country House, the people who were entitled to claim the diplomatic service as their preserve, the universities and the professions as their own, and the upper ranks of the Civil Service, and the best clubs. They were the rich folk who, during the industrial revolution, took over the feudal responsibilities to the State of the dispossessed nobles. They were, indeed, the people who made England what it is. How, at last, they faced their destiny there are the war records to show.

And we see now why it is this generation misses the significance of John Galsworthy's work. It is of the past, and for the future. It is of so recent a past that it is too poignant for us to read with that equanimity which a classic demands. Mr. Galsworthy is the historian of England's upper middle-class household. Even in late Victorian times it had nearly run its course; it was in the mellow October of its life, and Mr. Galsworthy gives it that wistfulness, as the shadow of its night and winter comes, and an understanding of its responses and perplexities, which only knowledge and judgment touched with compassion could bestow.

Now between it and us is the gulf of the war years—the Edward and Victorian times are with those of Queen Anne. We are not interested—that is, we are too acutely concerned with all that happened when the final hour struck, and that class in England saw its doom plainly written in the sky, to wish to read Mr. Galsworthy's subtle drama of those long, declining years which ended in the great calamity. We ourselves are shy of that poignant record. But how grateful to John Galsworthy will be the next generation! For we know, at least, what a treasure it is to come upon the thoughts and daily acts of a veritable household of the past—light falls, then, on men and women like ourselves. How much more instructive a butcher's bill will be, of the late war years, than most of the speeches of the great statesmen! Little relics like a ration card, a field postcard, a telegram with its final word destructive of hope, will say more to future students than all the heroic aspect given to the affair by the eloquent professional exhorters.

And Mr. Galsworthy has preserved for the future the intimate story of that Country House which gave England its name and fame from the Reform Bill to the War; and shows it just after that war, in the world of the upheaval, grouped like the tragic figures in great drama after doom is past. Such art as that surely must mean "immortality." The historians of the next century, who will try to make us live again, will read Mr. Galsworthy with delight and an understanding which is nowhere articulate to-day except in such volumes as these.

H. M. TOMLINSON.

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**Come Hither : a Collection of Rhymes and Poems for the Young of all Ages.** Made by WALTER DE LA MARE. (Constable. 21s.)

We begin our notes on a few of the many poetry-books lately published according to precedence. Mr. Symons brought out "Days and Nights" originally in 1889, attracting notice by the dramatic and mature character of his verse, and in particular finding favour with Walter Pater. The book is now reprinted, as the bulk of it assuredly deserves to be, with Pater's encomium prefixed. In Mr. Symons's new collection, "Love's Cruelty," the individual force of the poet has by no means decreased; even his rhetoric is distinguished; but the prevailing themes are not those which command a wide sympathy. The congregations which like to hear again and again of Salome have in Mr. Symons a poetic interpreter of vehemence and a genuine carnal fancy. He is far and away to-day's master of the sensuous and exotic region which so many newcomers try to capture without any such artistry as his.

Not long after Mr. Symons made his bow as a poet, another with Cornish connections came forward and made an impression on many good judges. The "Athenæum" of that day, which had seen in Mr. Symons rather a surplus of the sensational, but also a dramatic gift, expressed hopefulness concerning Mr. J. D. Hosken's sonnets. He now appears as a "cheerful giver" of songs which carry with them the air of the open, and makes his ballads of tinkerdom and wandering life without any of the false gusto which is commercially better. Mr. Hosken is no great innovator in the forms of verse, nor does he bring into the world mighty phrase. He is scholarly, but not dreary; simple, and clear, and truthful, his verse tranquillizes the mind—

"Bare legs and ragged skirt;  
Come to me, my honey,  
What is wealth but worldly dirt?  
Love's the surest money."

This is "the good old way"; it is by no means certain that we exchange it profitably for advanced mud-larkings.

Mr. Luce also pursues the ancient track. If you know your Gilpin, and enjoy the aquatints in Ireland's "Picturesque Medway"; if you have accompanied Gisborne through the forest and Hurdis about his Sussex parish in the botanical blank verse of quieter ages; then you may take the air gratefully beside Mr. Luce's favourite stream—pure pastoral brook. He is thoughtful, musical, and not without a special fancy here and there; he broods affectionately upon—

"foxgloves danced about by fan-winged flies,  
Azure of cranesbill, and the ruddy gem  
Of woodbine, and the purple-jewelled bud  
Of scabious, lovelier than the open flower."

More of the influence of poetry, the remote and opulent atmosphere, can be discerned in the no less tradition-serving verse of Mr. Pellow. He is at home with the quiet, haunted places and hours of "this England," and answers such grave and mellow association with a verse of mild beauty:—

"From this gable, that green door  
Subtle golden auras pour;  
Others are from glowing red  
Tavern windows slowly shed;  
Echoes of a firm and sweet  
Deeply-rooted life would beat  
Faintly in the churchyard walk  
Could the paving plainly talk."

Mr. Pellow is not particularly pictorial, but what he writes echoes the main beauty of scene and season with genuine pleasure.

The author of "The Secret Flowers" resembles him in that he does not paint with a curious intensity his woods and hills, his storms and glooms. In his poetic compositions, however, there is a hint of visionary quality which enriches

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whatever it lights on. In "The Sail" he produces an illusion by simple means, a charm which rewards both poet and listener. The rain becomes—

"A spectre that the lost wind blows  
To errantries that shape its own;  
And like a sail it swells and goes,  
And like a sail the wind is blown."

There is a sense of a gliding of all substantial things into the mysterious distance:—

"The hills their ancient mooring slip,  
Thick ropes of mist the old woods trail,  
Earth moves, a ghostly-timbered ship,  
Behind that urgent sweeping sail."

Mr. Taylor verges upon that singular awareness, almost a psychic phenomenon, which belongs to certain orders of our poetry.

Fine and vivid sympathy for humanity in bondage is the large element of Mr. W. R. Hughes's work. He approaches his subjects from an unexpected point, and with vigour and sometimes beauty of expression. He makes fun, and capital fun, out of that queer solemnity of spirit which gave us "Rectangular Education," and he conveys his underlying serious message through it all. His love for the world is deep; his anxiety that the generations now coming on should see a world worth loving is no less so. For his experience has given him cause to fear:—

"From a high place I saw the city  
Open and bare below me spread,  
And therein walked (O God of pity!)  
Few living, many dead.

"Dead men entombed in daily labour,  
Grappling for gold in ghostly strife;  
Dead neighbour chattering to dead neighbour;  
And dead youth—seeing life!"

Against this background of "civilization," his hopes, his recognitions of the triumphs of life shine out. He is not a town poet with his eyes on the ground, but a fellow-spirit of the craftsmen and the noble and gentle reverencers of the future who conquer circumstances.

Mr. Shephard's book, "Crown of Nothing," finds a place here because, though it is short and unostentatious, it has the marks of uncommon sensitiveness and freshness of expression. For the representation of landscape and the meadow-life of Nature, his "Beethoven Symphony" shows him to have inclination and resource. His "Old Grey Coat" is a poem of personal experience, and a moving one, the opening stanza of which again reveals his comprehension of Nature:—

"I took my old grey coat, and thought to go  
And shed my heart's mast in the sodden shaws,  
Where Ruin homilies, and bellman-daws  
Give counsel in cold rain, and grey winds blow  
Love's requiem in humming undertones.  
I thought to tread proud passion to the quags  
With beech and hazel, for the hunting-dogs  
Of Death to nose in, and his galloping roans  
To stamp its poisoned berries and spined burrs  
To rot in their own summer's sepulchres."

But the purpose and achievement of this poem concern another grief than Nature's.

Many interludes of rural association occur in the erratic poems of Mr. Kelway, a singer of Somerset and Devon. He can tell a tale in verse with energy (his "Pibsey Mill" is a lengthy and, in passages, powerful narration), but there is an ease and verisimilitude about his picture-work which, even in these days of too much pastoral, communicates a fragrance:—

"The golden elms, the cawing rooks,  
The poplars naked in the sky,  
The cheeping birds in sheltered nooks,  
The leaves rime-sodden where they lie. . . ."

Miss Fox Smith plays Dibdin to our age, when the sea, like everything else, is no doubt "not what it was." Her songs, of which the present collection gathers up the best in her previous volumes with some new ones, make out a very good case for the surviving romantics of the blue water. The intention in the main is evidently to "give us a song," but at times the poet is to be seen ousting the tambourinist, and the author's fancy and colouring increase in significance, to yield such fine lines as "Missing." Miss Doyle has a light touch, which she employs with placid and genial result in depicting the quieter waters and sedater navigation of inland canals. It is a world in itself, alluring to those pent up

elsewhere. Miss Millay's verse, which in America is so warmly esteemed, is tender and picturesque, and the opportunity to study it in *extenso* is now welcome given. Her work appears to have no singular obstacle for English readers, its associations being nothing wildly "progressive"; similarly Mr. Robinson's complex and delicate view of human relationships—a triangle—is not hard to read. We respect him for his refusal to be a jazz poet, but he sticks too close to prose.

The other books of our catalogue are anthologies. The new "Oxford Poetry" is "mannerly-hearted," but takes the stream with a safe breast-stroke. Mr. Pertwee's choice of (junior) current poetry is generous; it is intended for reciters as well as readers. Miss Trotter's war anthology, enlarged, suffers from an excess of "splendour"; but we gladly acknowledge its wide range and interest. The proceeds are given to the Soldiers and Sailors' Help Society. "Contemporary German Poetry" is an extensive set of versions, neat and plain, with brief biographies supplied chiefly by the poets. Religious anthologies of the past are generally worth rescuing from the booksellers' tubs; should we ever meet with Mr. Crosse's selection (though he, like many more, takes the eighteenth century more or less "as read") in those repositories, we should bear it off rejoicing. We have left the best till last. Mr. de la Mare's choice is a beautiful and abundant expression of a poet's mind discovering kinship of delights all through the English heritage of verse. He gives us wealth of fancy and music, and a spirit of youth in everything. He sees the poetry in "an old song." The present writer may be forgiven for restoring to John Clare his "Evening Primrose," which (No. 438) has been conveyed by error or gallantry to Emily Brontë.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

#### A PORTMANTEAU.

**Things Seen on the Riviera.** By Captain LESLIE RICHARDSON. (Seeley & Service. 3s. 6d.)

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SINCE we have a regular Mansion-House dinner before us, let us but tickle our tongues over the *hors d'œuvre*. The Riviera—"We are at Nice, on the Côte d'Azur, the sun is shining, and last night His Majesty King Carnival made a triumphal entry into his good city of Nice." Those who choose to linger with him may, but I must be off to Chiswick. There are a great many things to be seen there between the Iguanodon and the Boat Race, but as for the print, it is but the parsley to the exhaustive illustrations. The Prague volume is an average sample of the familiar chronicle, spiced with a humour that will appeal to some tastes, while the dolorous account of the oppressed women of Persia is three times too long, padded and prudish, but saying all the nice, progressive things. Persia is *terra incognita*, but I do know something of East Anglia, and Mr. Morley strikes me as a literary somnambulist. He has a most disconcerting way of suddenly going to sleep and at the same time continuing his walk. Aldeburgh and not a word of its marshes, except to say that Crabbe hated them,

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when Crabbe is the marshes in terms of literature ; the Blythe sands and not a word of the exquisite Blythe River and Blytheburgh Church, which dominates it ; the Broads and not a word of the Hickling district, which is the real Broads ; the Norfolk coast and nothing of Blakeney ; and yet another blank for the Breck district between Thetford and Brandon ! This is the play of "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark. Mr. Fox's semi-political account of ourselves from what is vilely called the "viewpoint" of an Imperialist colonial is shrewd, tolerant, and balanced, and, granted his bias, he has some sound things to say, notably that while the French are superior to us in artistic education, we are their betters in artistic feeling. And he is probably right in thinking that our success among backward peoples is partly due to the very arrogance of our complacency—let them wallow. I am glad he likes the fairy green of England. That, at least, is a national virtue. The "impossible island" is Corsica, and a very unsavoury picture is drawn of the Corsicans, particularly of the romantic "vendetta," which the author exposes as the mean and sordid brutality one supposed it was. These and similar reflections redeem the book from the dullness of the sporting adventures. "Spain, the land of romance, of legend, of heroes ! It is to be ours. We are on our way . . . The glamour . . ." Castanets, you see, on p. 1. So very comfortably we let the author go on ahead, valiantly pursuing Romance even into the bullring, where her glamorous cloak proves very serviceable. Mr. McLaren takingly relates his knock-about experiences in New Guinea, Torres Straits, and the Solomons, trading, pearl-fishing, and what not. Queer people, the Papuans of what the author quaintly calls the "Palæolithic Wild"—"in their hearts trading was as much a matter of exchanging presents as a matter of real business"—and the Torres Islanders to whom the enjoyment of life was daily, and not for a fortnight in the year and Saturday evenings. What a lot they have to learn from civilization !

And so to Africa. Now on the west coast of Africa there is an unregenerate, unbettered, unenlightened negro State called Liberia, and "The Black Republic" tells us how very indigo it is. It is incapable of civilized government, and all the time its wonderful natural resources are undeveloped, unexploited. The moral is that a Great Power owes it to civilization to take up the white man's burden, erase this blot upon progress, and assume control of the country—including its vegetable and mineral wealth—the oil-palm, for instance, the Liberian species being known as the itching oil-palm. Mr. Cannan's letters, principally from Africa, are spoiled by their exacerbated egotism, which turns indignation into irritation and criticism into complaint. There is a case against the white occupation of Africa, possibly a terrible one. But Mr. Cannan goes and belittles it all. True irony, feeling, and understanding escape him. Mr. Barns has a great reputation as an explorer, so that to say that the only readable and interesting portion of his ponderous volume are Prof. Gregory's few words on the geology of the great craters west of Mombasa seems a sad heresy. I admit it may be partly prejudice on my part. African big-game hunting in the present condition of the fauna makes me feel positively sick with disgust. The selfishness and brutishness and vandalism which are so mercilessly tearing into fragments the curious and fascinating manuscript of African wild life upset one's belief in the persistence of creation to such an extent that I am unable to be just to the big-game hunter. Mr. Barns is not a mere savage in slaughter, like so many of the others ; but how can he go gorilla-shooting when he himself testifies to their harmlessness, their relationship to man, their pathetic helplessness, and the danger of their extinction ? But it isn't only that. Mr. Barns is neither a man of science nor a writer ; he depends for his effects simply upon the new. He is read because he has discovered a fresh terrain upon this jejune old globe. Only as some magical butterfly is like a bit of tissue paper in a glass case, so the commonplace of the book overcomes the wonders of its material.

And so at last we reach the one and only artist in the batch, and then what a dreary waste appears all other print ! Mr. Barns may seem politely to sneer at the literary touch, but art is the very breath of life, be its subject putrefaction. That, indeed, is Mr. Powys's, for a darker, fiercer,

more despairing impression of Africa there could not be than is caught in these sketches. Mr. Shanks, in his appreciative Preface, talks of passionate detachment ; one would rather call it a desperately controlled agony and rage. And there is something of Mr. Tomlinson's power in the writing, though the irony is less assured and the beauty less haunting. The Gorgon's head of Africa turns all hearts to stone, and Mr. Powys's pictures of the British settler are even more terrible than his more immediately tragic ones. "I never have seen such faces," he writes, "without a trace of refinement, without a trace of sensibility, without a trace of distinction, of individuality, sharp, predatory, colonial, commonplace, no difference whatever : all exactly the same." The goddess Ironia has Mr. Barns on her right hand and Mr. Powys on her left, and it is a rare experience to read the latter when you are fresh from the former's beatific visions of the commercialized Africa of the future. And it is a rare beauty, too, that is snatched out of so black a matrix. The author sends "a bullet into the guts" of a female zebra, and the next day finds the male furiously driving the vultures away :—

"And as I sat on my pony watching the scene, I knew that this untamed, fantastical animal, restlessly running to and fro, in the vivid sunshine of that tropical noon, had thrown out a challenge against the material universe, more desperate, more beautiful, and more convincing, than any I had heard from pulpit or platform."

Mr. Grant Richards showed courage and zeal for literature in publishing this book.

"The Edge of the Desert" (Tunisia) makes a good ending. Miss Dunbar went quietly and thoughtfully through the native parts, sketching and making observations, and there is a sharp and just quality about them, combined with an unpretentious grace of feeling that is most agreeable. She notes the easy, equalitarian way of the French rulers with the Arabs, which she thinks a happier one than ours with our subject peoples.

H. J. MASSINGHAM.

#### GIFT BOOKS.

If we had not seen them so often before we should, when faced by the architectural splendours of the gift books in the Christmas shops, share the incredulity of the old lady on seeing her first giraffe. But pity 'tis 'tis true. For size and the dazzle of their purple and gold they are worth their weight in vulgarity. What is their purpose in life's affairs is among the eternal mysteries. They clearly are not intended to be read, and a room which could be ornamented by them could also admit, as added glory, an electric advertisement sign. It would appear that the only chance for a world's classic at Christmas-time is to dress it up like a pantomime monarch. It then can lay claim to an appearance of equality with the genuine rubbish wearing the same fancy costume.

Because exceptions can be found is the reason for this notice. Nearly all the gift books that have come our way this December are intended for children. There are good ones, very good ones, and a large number of another sort. One of the first we picked up had an unpretentious cover, could be carried in the pocket, and the publisher (Blackie) asked but two shillings for it. It began its story in this way : "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den ; and I laid me down in that place to sleep ; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream." This is not the language one is accustomed to during a General Election, when the last things to be aimed at are "to be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it is." We have the word of Bunyan that that was his purpose, and he achieved a miracle which can never be wrought by cleverness out of insincerity. The union of virtue and courage with descriptive and narrative powers in the highest degree makes "The Pilgrim's Progress" one of the wonders of our literature. Here is a gift book to be welcomed by grown-ups who discriminate, and by children, whose fresh minds are quick to respond to tales of noble action nobly told.

Another familiar classic is "Treasure Island," from Cassell's (15s.). It is ornate, somewhat, but the print is a

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delight, though the illustrations by N. C. Wyeth do nothing to improve upon the firm outline and individuality of Stevenson's buccaneers. "Kidnapped" and "The Black Arrow" are published uniform with this volume.

Most decidedly not for children is "The Merry Tales of Jacques Tournebroche," by Anatole France (Lane, 10s. 6d.). It is the translation made by Alfred Allinson some years ago, illustrated with sixteen amusing woodcuts by Marcia Lane Foster which have the merit of not obscuring upon the ironic humour of M. France. A book from which some of the fame has departed is Jefferies's "Story of My Heart." A beautifully produced edition is published by Duckworth (10s. 6d.). There was a day when we were carried away by this "soul-thought," but the pale cast has lost some of its purity to-day, we fear, and has acquired a hectic flush. There is sufficient chilliness in Ethelbert White's designs, however, to lessen the feverishness.

Much trouble and expense were involved, we are convinced, in producing "Profitable Proverbs: Here follow five and twenty woodcuts illustrating as many proverbs: suitably garnished and offered up to a kindly public by Alexina Ogilvie" (Cayme Press, 10s. 6d.). "By frankly invoking the spirit of the early woodcuts," says the introduction, "Alexina Ogilvie has found the very heart of her subject. It is just the naïve, artless spirit of a child, brimful of those unconscious absurdities without which a child is only pitiable." And it may be so. The naïveté we grant at once.

"The Life and Death of Sir John Falstaff" (Dent, 12s. 6d.) contains "The Merry Wives of Windsor," the Falstaff scenes from "Henry IV." (Parts I. and II.) and from "Henry V.," with fourteen coloured plates by Signor G. B. Galizzi, and the well-known Falstaff essay by the late Sir George Radford. The public that likes its Shakespeare in this way is well served by this handsome volume.

"Low and I: A Cooked Tour in London," by F. W. Thomas, with pictures by Low (Methuen, 7s. 6d.), is a very happy double turn by real humorists. It is good fun from start to finish. Alexander Irvine's "My Lady of the Chimney-Corner" appears to have made its entry among the classics. A new and finely produced edition comes from Collins (12s. 6d.) illustrated from paintings specially made for it by George Ogilvy Reid. Whether the subtleties of "Moby Dick" are too much for the young mind is a question which might be argued, but Hodder & Stoughton's experiment is worth the trying. Certainly there is enough whale hunting and menace of strange seas to thrill the adventure-loving mind of any boy; but the publishers of this stately volume, which is priced at twenty shillings, should have indicated that cuts have been made in the text. A book for children of the rich is "The Ship that Sailed to Mars," a fantasy told and pictured by William M. Timlin (Harrap, 42s.). The illustrations for the most part are undeniably good, and the print has beauty, but the magnificence of the whole production made it impossible for us to discover the quality of the story. Such a presentation is too awe-inspiring, too distracting, to be treated as a book.

The volumes we have named may be tried upon the old and the young. In the list that follows there can be no doubt that the appeal is to the children. We have selected those that we feel can be honestly commended. The output of fairies and animals is as large as ever. One excellent entertainment is Mr. Belloc's "Bad Child's Book of Beasts," which includes the Cautionary Tales and other verses (Duckworth, 5s.). The picture extravagancies by B. T. B. are in the spirit of the comic text. Many of the fairy books are reissues of old favourites and need no word of ours to introduce them to those for whom they are meant. We will name: "The Arabian Nights," with appropriate pictures by George Soper (Allen & Unwin, 4s. 6d.); Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper," with coloured plates by W. Hatherell (Dent, 12s. 6d.); the "Pearl," "Ruby," "Silver," "Diamond," and "Emerald" Fairy Books (Hutchinson, 5s. each); "The Magic Book" and six other volumes based on the tales in the fairy books edited by Andrew Lang (Longmans, 3s.); "Wonder Tales of the East," stories gleaned by Donald A. Mackenzie from Egypt and Japan and other far lands (Blackie, 5s.);

"The Norwegian Fairy Book," in which appears the original Peer Gynt legend as it was "before Ibsen gave it more symbolic meanings" (Fisher Unwin, 7s. 6d.); "The Danish Fairy Book," from the same publishers; "The Anne-Anderson Fairy-Tale Book" (Nelson, 10s. 6d.), a retelling of old favourites from Grimm and others, with dainty decorations in colour and black and white by Anne Anderson; "Wee Men," by Brenda Girvin and Monica Cosens, illustrated by Charles Robinson (Hutchinson, 2s. 6d.); "Tales from Timbuktu," by Constance Smedley, with pictures by Maxwell Armfield (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.), another successful excursion into the folklore of far places; "Yvette in Venice and Titania's Tower" (Milford, 10s. 6d.), in which Neville Wilkinson combines story with instruction in history and geography; "The Adventures of Harlequin," by Francis Bickley, with decorations by John Austen (Selwyn & Blount, 7s. 6d.), a fantastic love-story about Columbine and Harlequin, charmingly told and illustrated; and "The Brave Little Tailor," a delightful pantomime by the late George Calderon and William Caine (Grant Richards, 7s. 6d.). All these are good, and some are really joyous.

Among other books not exclusively about fairies should be recommended: "Number One, Joy Street" (Blackwell, 6s.), a very fine production indeed, the contributors being Hilaire Belloc, Walter de la Mare, Laurence Housman, Halliwell Sutcliffe, Edith Sitwell, Eleanor Farjeon, Hugh Chesterman, Mabel Marlowe, and Rose Fyleman; "The Littlest One," verses by Marion St. John Webb, set to music by Ralph Dunstan, with pictures by Margaret Tarrant and Kathleen Nixon (Harrap, 7s. 6d.); "The Pinafore-Pocket Story-Book," prose and verse for small children, by Miriam Clark Potter (Dent, 6s.); "Topsy-Turvy Tales," told by Elsie Munro, with pictures by Heath Robinson (Lane, 7s. 6d.); "The Wonder Book of Nature," admirably written and illustrated (Ward & Lock, 6s.); "Tinkelly Winkle," by Netta Syrett, pictures by Marcia Lane Foster (Lane, 6s.), told vivaciously by one with understanding of children's ways and thoughts; "The Children's Bible," selections from the New and Old Testaments, translated and arranged by Henry Sherman and Charles Foster Kent (Scribners, 15s.); and "The Bible Story," by the Rev. James Baikie (Black, 15s.).

The annuals maintain their reputation. We may mention "Chatterbox" (5s.), "Chatterbox Newsbox" (2s.), "The Prize" (2s. 6d.), "Everyday" (5s.), "Leading Strings" (2s. 6d.), all published by Wells Gardner; Blackie's "Children's Annual," "Girls' Annual," and "Boys' Annual" (5s. each); and "Herbert Strang's Annual for Boys" (5s.), "Mrs. Strang's Annual for Girls" (5s.), "The Oxford Annual for Boy Scouts" (3s. 6d.), and "The Tiny Folks' Annual" (3s. 6d.), published by Milford.

It is a remarkable array of Christmas cards and calendars that the Medici Society has prepared. The skilful reproduction in colour and photogravure of which the name of the publishers has long been an assurance answers our expectations to the full. There are sets of the old masters in most agreeable copies, including many a favourite from Hals and from Turner, from da Vinci and Raphael, and a host besides. There are two "Water-Colour Series" after contemporary drawings of striking scenes and cities here and abroad. Nor are the less aesthetic fairy and nursery-rhyme decorations lacking which may captivate the younger sort of recipients. The almanacs, which have to solve the problem of pleasing throughout a twelvemonth, set out with all prospect of success; Dou's "Herring Seller" and da Forli's "Angel Gabriel" in such good likenesses, for example, should go on triumphantly. Most luxurious of all are the "Lorenzo Calendars," illustrating the old masters, and framed in gilded facsimile of a Florentine model. The Medici Press publishes also various volumes appropriate to the season of compliments—slight and neat selections from Shelley, Keats, Blake, de Musset; children's books by Marion St. John Webb and Margaret Tarrant; and larger ones, such as a new edition of Alice Meynell's "Mary the Mother of Jesus."

In this connection it will suffice to mention that the British Museum have issued series of illuminated cards, "Miniatures of the Nativity and Epiphany." The full set, fifteen in all, costs half-a-crown.

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**YORK HOUSE, PORTUGAL STREET, W.C.2**

## A CLASSIC AND SOME OTHERS FOR BOYS.

GRIMLY and without hope, but murmuring resignedly that it was our duty and we must, we opened this year's consignment of Christmas books for boys. They were the usual dead weight. "Bang! Bang! Bang! The shots were simultaneous." This auspicious and unbeautiful opening phrase from an adventure-story read many years ago—all that remains, alas! of Jules Verne—runs through the mind in reading these books like a persistent and inconsequential chorus. It would be of much advantage if it were made the rule that all these romances should begin with this phrase. A recognized and fixed opening would save the writers a deal of labour, and then they could carry on the rest of the story as usual, without the trouble of thinking. For it is not the impossible things that happen, because only a soured and shrivelled mind will deny the likelihood of any kind of adventure in the kingdom of romance, but the positively amazing freedom from sequence that is the most noticeable characteristic of the average yarn written for boys. Nothing need ever join up. Anything can be thrown in. This latitude is among the wonders of literature.

With every wish to be fair, this reviewer has tried his hardest to believe that the present tastelessness for him of these stories is something unenviably acquired, like grey hair. He remembers a boy who read his fair share of shockers without becoming very noticeably depraved by the orgy. Yet why is it that, except for the phrase from Jules Verne, he can recall nothing of those books, while "Huckleberry Finn" and about a dozen more remain in the memory like adventures bright and blessed?

We suggest the secret is in a priceless gift which nearly every youngster holds. Give him any old truck of a book, written by a writer without grace of words and with but a moderate talent for inventing incidents, and the boy's own imaginative energy will make up for the deficiencies in the raw material you have put into his hands. He will not criticize you nor your present—neither will he bear eternal gratitude. But give him a work by a magician, whose heroes and episodes are matched by a noble diction, and his mind is enriched and enchanted for ever, and he will bless you for the rest of this pilgrimage. The young will try all things and hold fast to that which is good. A decent attitude towards life, colour, and imagination, and a sure gift of narration are the elements of the indubitable magic that makes captive the young heart, as it gives pleasure to the trained perceptions of the elders. In the mist of the readings of our youth there are certain days that keep their lustre undimmed. They mark the real adventures among masterpieces. How fresh in the memory stays the wonder-sentence that opens the "Pilgrim's Progress"! And by the grace of the editor, there was a jewel buried in the mass of cotton-wool sent to us this season—"The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," by Mark Twain (Nash & Grayson, 7s. 6d.). Instantly, we recalled a momentous voyage on a raft with a boy we can never forget, and at once we settled down to that journey again.

Was it really all so good as memory painted it? Well, we have been lost again on that river and reached the end breathless and happy, and are justified in our faith that it was not distance that gave it the colour and the glow. "Huck Finn" is an authentic masterpiece; rereading it was the best literary experience we have enjoyed for many a day. It was the happiest inspiration of Twain's genius, and will endure. It was his only work, we believe, that gave him assurance of a place among the writers of first rank, and there was something more than fun in his remark that it was the best novel he had ever read. Not a book for boys especially? Of course not. And that is its sure testimony. If there are some old children and immature grown-ups who do not like it, then reading is not their line of entertainment at all. It can be made the test of one's capacity for enjoying literature. As in all great dramatic stories, there are the qualities of suspense and swift movement and emotion and laughter. Even when the fun is hilarious, can be heard a tender, if ironical, undertone, at once profound, touching, and exquisite. As memorable as the characters are the villages and the river where they enact their tragedies and comedies. Huck is poet and every boy, too. How exactly and inevitably the scene is woven into the story! Think of the summer storm on the island, when Huck

and the nigger hid in the cavern, and the rain and wind came like all fury:—

"It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale under-side of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—*fst!* it was as bright as glory, and you'd have a little glimpse of tree-tops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels downstairs—where its long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know."

We are reassured that "Huckleberry Finn" is among the human books which are most constant and most loved. We are properly grateful to the publishers for reminding us that there are books that are really books for Christmas presents. Nash & Grayson also issue "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" as a companion volume.

Now, there is a use for the other books. They can be given to the youngsters while the elders try "Huck Finn" on themselves. Among the host we select:—

"The Fourth Form at Westbourne." By Charles J. Mansford (Jarrold, 3s. 6d.). A story of a highly exciting school. The antics of two boys masquerading as a camel at a concert are sufficiently funny to make the book worth while. If the deeds of the villain are black, the hero is valiant and honourable, drawn without a shadow to show up the high lights of his moral character.

"Second Innings." By Hylton Cleaver (Milford, 6s.). Once was a time when the reviewer of boys' books, feverish from the excitement of too much adventure at his time of life, found some refreshment and tonic in Mr. Hylton Cleaver's school-stories. Usually, his book made the toil through the "other guess-stuff" worth while. His boys had more wit than any boy could have, but it was wit, and their pranks were almost believable. We feel Mr. Cleaver has let us down this year, and we can but hope that the youngsters will not notice it. A little of the old sparkle is left in the dialogue, but the things the lads get up to in "Second Innings" make us reconciled with our humdrum fate and our grey hairs. We regret that the hero was only once thrashed by the Head; it should have happened daily. There are motor-car adventures, football matches, fights, crooks, and a girl, yes, a girl with hair of auburn, bobbed and curly, and eyes "of a kind which had induced more than one A.R.A. to accost her mother at a fashionable watering-resort and ask leave to paint Sylvia from life." The story will go down where stupid antics mean sprightliness, and rudeness fun.

"The Pirate Submarine." By Percy Westerman (Nisbet, 5s.) This story is about some pirates of our own day who carry on by means of a submarine. Captain Cain is apparently intended to be an honourable man. He steals the submarine, kidnaps people, sinks ships, plunders Germans and Frenchmen, and sinks a Spanish destroyer with her eighty men, but, as he never fires upon an English ship, Mr. Westerman's young readers are asked to regard him as "a bit of a sport."

"Clipped Wings." (Blackie, 6s.) Mr. Westerman is also the author of this book. "Britain had at last a definite policy. No longer was she content to toe the line at the behest of a party of international politicians assembled at Washington. She was determined to regain her rightful position as Mistress of the Seas, without acting harshly towards her weaker neighbours; anxious to keep peace on the principle of the strong man armed . . ." And so on. If boys like that kind of talk there is a lot more of it in the book.

"Men of the Mist." By T. C. Bridges. (Harrap, 3s. 6d.) As if grizzlies as big as oxen, Indians and bad white men, avalanches and storms were not enough to make life interesting in the country of Mr. Bridges's story, we have a mastodon, with eyes that glowed red as live coals, which chases two boys just arrived from an English school, and also and particularly a dinosaur. The last-named monster was shaped like a lizard, but moved like a kangaroo, making the earth shake as it leaped. It had a head like an alli-

## The Bodley Head Christmas List.

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### TWO BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.

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*Send for The Bodley Head Christmas List.*

John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., Vigo Street London W.1.

gator's, and when roused to anger made noises like sudden explosions of steam. The nasty beast tried to make a meal of the youngsters, but they were not the sort to be destroyed by a prehistoric survivor when there were stones around to heave at it.

"Donald Marston," by M. C. Barnard (Sheldon Press, 2s. 6d.), is about a school where life was never dull. Nor is any page of the following selection lacking in thrills: "The Great Antarctic," by John Mackie (Jarrold, 3s. 6d.); "The Three Midshipmen," by W. H. G. Kingston (Milford, 5s.), in the uniform edition of Kingston's excellent stories; "Nat the Naturalist," by G. Manville Fenn (Blackie, 3s. 6d.); "By Airship to the Tropics," by Rowland Walker (Ward, Lock, 4s. 6d.); "Between Two Stools," by Harold Avery (Nelson, 5s.); "The Werewolf of Whispers School," by Kent Carr (Chambers, 5s.); and "The Romance of the Sea Rovers," by E. Keble Chatterton (Seeley, Service, 6s.), a highly commendable history of sea adventures.

"Join us and you'll never be dull," as the Suffragists used to say.

But, having read them, not without gratitude, we think we will take another turn on the raft with Huck and the nigger, not forgetting the Duke of Bilgewater and the long-lost Dolphin.

PHILIP TOMLINSON.

#### OUR GIRLS.

**The Child's House.** By MARJORY MACMURCHY. (Macmillan, 6s.)  
**Camp-Fire Yarns.** Edited by MARGARET STUART LANE. (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.)  
**Schoolgirl Kitty.** By ANGELA BRAZIL. (Blackie, 6s.)  
**Rachel Out West.** By BESSIE MARCHANT. (Blackie, 5s.)  
**The Fortunes of Prue.** By BESSIE MARCHANT. (Ward & Lock, 4s. 6d.)  
**Kitty's Chinese Garden.** By JOAN LESLIE. (Oxford University Press, 5s.)  
**The Treasure League.** By R. J. DE M. RUDOLF. (Sheldon Press, 3s.).  
**The Sport of the School.** By ETHEL TALBOT. (Chambers, 3s. 6d.)  
**The Junior Captain.** By ELSIE J. OXENHAM. (Chambers, 5s.)  
**Captain Cara.** By CHRISTINE CHAUDLER. (Nisbet, 5s.)  
**The Only Day-Girl.** By DOROTHEA MOORE. (Nisbet, 5s.)  
**Neighbours at School.** By ETHEL TALBOT. (Nelson, 5s.)  
**Joan : A High-School Girl.** By BRENDA GIRVIN. (Oxford University Press, 6s.)  
**The Rebellion of Margaret.** By GERALDINE MOCKLER. (Jarrold, 3s. 6d.)

In the majority of girls' schools it is now the custom to prohibit the reading of girls' school-stories. One can guess the reason of the prohibition. It is made in the interest of the teachers. Were their pupils roused to a full sense of the possibilities of school-life, more than the present number of breakdowns would occur among members of an already harassed profession. In addition to lessons, games, examinations, scoldings, visits to the British Museum, and outbreaks of whooping-cough, the schoolmistress would be expected to produce each term at least one recipient of the Royal Humane Society's Medal, at least one lost heiress, one secret tunnel, one missing will, one suspected ghost, one smugglers' cave, one buried treasure; a robbery, a burglary, a false accusation of theft, and a variety of nearly fatal accidents. Until lately she might have been expected, also, to provide a German spy. In view of the stand that schoolmistresses have made it is difficult to understand the laxity of parents who allow books of this kind into their houses. The attack on the parent is far more serious than that on the teacher. A hint of its gravity may be gathered from the following facts: of these fourteen books for young girls, nine have orphans for heroines, one has a child who believes her parents to have been tortured to death by savages, and of the remaining four three contain parents who are either odious or negligible. Those little acts of kindness and of love that compose the ordinary parent's

day are quite unrecognized. There is no mention of the getting out of the winter combinations or of the finding of the button-hook. If Bolshevik literature may bring about the subversion of the State, may not our girls' Christmas books bring about the subversion of the home? No impartial child confronted with the greater number of these volumes could fail to deduce from them that parents are at the worst detestable and at the best unnecessary.

The only safe books on this list are "Camp-Fire Yarns" (a collection of stories that provides a variety of enjoyments, including the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens, the old English version of Rumpelstiltskin, Tom-tit-tot, Arthurian legends, and stories by Dickens, Hans Andersen, Daudet, D'Aulnoy, and other famous and less famous writers) and "The Child's House," a recollection of an old-fashioned Canadian childhood. Miss MacMurchy's little book is gently reminiscent of "Little Women." It has both humour and pathos, and reveals sharply the point of its situations without losing the childishness of the child who records them. Any young person who wants a present for a great-aunt would be well advised to choose "The Child's House." Little girls would probably prefer Miss Angela Brazil's "Schoolgirl Kitty," which contains an account of sightseeing in Paris, or "Rachel Out West." Rachel, who has on the whole the most delightful life of any of our orphaned heroines, has no grown-up relations of any kind. Coyote Crag and Quail Gulch were hers for the scaling. She rode a mule, rescued her brother when Bite MacGowan threw rocks at him, was rescued herself whilst gloriously rescuing another young woman from drowning, became rich through her brother's discoveries in the goldfields, and married a man who had stopped runaway horses. A full and happy life.

Orphans, again, are Prue and her brother Theo in "The Fortunes of Prue," and they went to live in Paraguay. At the beginning they did not have as good a time as Rachel, for Theo was falsely accused of stealing a wallet at a railway station. If it had not been for the arrival of their old friend Mr. Bendigo Wilson, a man of world-fame, Bob would have been in the hands of the police. As it was, they did not even miss their train, and the accuser turned up in the last chapter but one to own his mistake and find the wallet in the lining of his overcoat. Meantime, Prue and Theo grew oranges in Paraguay, and baffled a gang of thieves who entered the store-room of their house in broad daylight, stuffed their pockets with food, and threatened to shoot anyone who stopped them. When this danger was past Prue and Theo found a long-lost uncle and became possessed of an orange farm of their own.

Kitty, in "Kitty's Chinese Garden," began by having an uncle—a great-uncle, retired colonel, choleric, and impossible to live with. Luckily, she had kept one of her parents—a father—and went to live with him in China. Here she saw a great deal of Chinese life and became the possessor of an old Chinese house and garden, and of another great-uncle—much more amiable than the first and, moreover, by the time the relationship was discovered, dead.

"The Treasure League" opens in circumstances to arouse a sympathetic terror in any but the stoutest heart—Aline and Joyce Raynham, though not orphans, are chased by an infuriated cow. "'How I do detest the country!' panted Aline," and no wonder. These rural adventures ended pleasantly with the discovery of a safe containing forty-five thousand pounds.

"The Rebellion of Margaret" took the form of changing names with a young woman who wanted to be an opera-singer. Margaret was an orphan and lived with one of the disagreeable grandfathers who are, I believe, more numerous in fiction than in life. She found it more agreeable to be a well-to-do young woman under her own name than a nursery-governess under someone else's.

The rest of these books are cheerful school stories, and include the usual number of escapes from drowning, falls over cliffs, and orphans. All end happily. How much happier Romeo and Juliet would have been had they been orphans!

SYLVIA LYND.

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